

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IO-13
EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /089 W
-----250816Z 033669 /11

R 241437Z JAN 77
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4545
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 0518

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: IS, PFOR, EG
SUBJECT: FURTHER ISRAELI VIEWS ON EGYPTIAN DISTURBANCES

REF: TEL AVIV 0452

1. AT THE WEEKLY CABINET SESSION JANUARY 23, FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON SPOKE ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECENT DISTURBANCES IN EGYPT, SUGGESTING THAT THE ONLY WAY FOR EGYPT TO BREAK OUT OF ITS ECONOMIC VICIOUS CIRCLE IS TO ABANDON ITS POLICY OF AGGRESSION TOWARDS ISRAEL, TO SPEND LESS ON MILITARY PURCHASES AND MORE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT. THE TANGLE OF INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS IN EGYPT'S POLICY IS LIABLE TO LEAD IT TO HARDEN ITS STANCE OUT OF THE HOPE THAT THERE WILL BE COUNTRIES WHICH WILL WANT TO SAVE THE EXISTING REGIME IN EGYPT AT THE EXPENSE OF ISRAEL'S INTERESTS, ALLON SAID, AND ONLY TIME WILL TELL WHETHER EGYPT'S
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RULER WILL ADOPT A REALISTIC POLICY OR ONE OF AD-VENTURISM.

2. YEDIOT AHARONOT, AL HAMISHMAR, AND THE JERUSALEM POST ALL DEVOTE EDITORIALS TO MUSTAFA AMIN'S SUGGESTION THAT EGYPT WITHDRAW FROM ITS CONFLICT WITH ISRAEL FOR A PERIOD OF TEN YEARS. THE POST

WRITER BELIEVES THAT AMIN ("A CONFIDENT OF ANWAR SADAT") MUST HAVE HAD PRIOR SANCTION FOR HIS PROVOCATIVE IDEA, WHICH APPARENTLY WAS MEANT TO STIMULATE THE GENEROSITY OF THE OIL-RICH ARABS. THE EGYPTIAN PEOPLE AND THEIR LEADER OUGHT TO GIVE THE IDEA MOST CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, THE POST URGES.

3. ISRAELI OFFICIALS BELIEVE THAT SADAT'S POSITION HAS NOT BEEN ENDANGERED, BUT HIS PRESTIGE HAS BEEN TARNISHED, ACCORDING TO DAVAR (BLOCH) ON JANUARY 24. WHAT IS EXPECTED TO FOLLOW, BLOCH WRITES, ARE MOVES BY SADAT TO EXTRACT GREATER FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR BOTH THE OIL COUNTRIES AND THE WEST, AND INCREASED EGYPTIAN URGING ON THE UNITED STATES TO STEP UP POLITICAL MOVES FOR A SOLUTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

4. IN A COMMENTARY IN YEDIOT AHARONOT JANUARY 21, ARAB AFFAIRS ANALYST GUINEY WRITES THAT THE EGYPTIAN MASSES RIOTED BECAUSED UNWANTED AND UNANTICIPATED AUSTERITY MEASURES RAN COUNTER TO THEIR HIGH ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS AFTER THE 1973 WAR, THE RECOVERY OF THE ABU RODEIS OILFIELDS, AND THE REOPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL; BECAUSE THEY WILL NOT ACCEPT ANY MORE EMPTY PROMISES; AND ABOVE ALL, BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF EQUALITY UNDER A REGIME WHERE THERE ARE PLENTY OF FAT CATS. EXTERNALLY, NEITHER THE ARAB OIL STATES NOR THE U.S. CAN AFFORD TO LET THE SADAT REGIME FALL, THE FORMER BECAUSE THEY FEAR A CHAIN REACTION IN THEIR OWN CONSERVATIVE DOMAINS, UNCLASSIFIED

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THE LATTER BECAUSE SADAT IS THE CORNERSTONE TO AMERICAN PLANS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. BOTH CAN BE EXPECTED TO RENDER SPECIAL AID TO THE SHAKY EGYPTIAN ECONOMY, WHICH WILL HELP SOOTHE EGYPTIAN TOWNSPEOPLE FOR A WHILE. THE LOGICAL COURSE WOULD BE FOR EGYPT AND ISRAEL TO MAKE A PEACE AGREEMENT, FREEING THE RESOURCES OF BOTH FOR INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT, BUT SADAT IS NOW EVEN MORE DEPENDENT ON HIS ARMY AND CANNOT CUT ITS BUDGET. AND IN THE EVENT OF AN AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL, SADAT WOULD SURELY RECEIVE LESS ASSISTANCE FROM HIS BROTHER ARABS. THEREFORE, THE RIOTS IN EGYPT WILL NOT PROMOTE THE CAUSE OF PEACE.

5. COMMENT: SADAT'S TROUBLES INSIDE EGYPT HAVE GENERATED BOTH HOPE AND FEARS AMONG ISRAELIS. THE HOPE IS THAT AN EGYPTIAN LEADER WILL FINALLY REALIZE THAT IT IS IN HIS OWN INTEREST, AS WELL AS IN THE INTEREST OF HIS COUNTRY, TO COME TO A FINAL AGREE-

MENT WITH ISRAEL (BY DEFINITION, ONE ACCEPTABLE
TO ISRAELIS). THE FEARS ARE THAT THIS EGYPTIAN
LEADER WILL NOT AND PERHAPS CANNOT DO SO, AND THAT
THIS MODERATE (QUESTIONABLY SO, FOR MOST ISRAELIS)
LEADER MIGHT BE REPLACED BY SOMEONE WORSE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL DISORDERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Document Source: CORE
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770026-0487
Format: TEL
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770123/aaaaatyx.tel
Line Count: 122
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 720a2bd2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 TEL AVIV 452
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Sep-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3517211
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FURTHER ISRAELI VIEWS ON EGYPTIAN DISTURBANCES
TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/720a2bd2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009